

BAKER-YANKEY-WETZEL CONNECTIONS

The Yankey, (Jencke, Janke, Jancke, or Jaencke); Nease (Nehs), Wetzel (Whetzel, Weissel, Weitzel), and Baker (Becker) families are interconnected. The Yankey, Nease, Wetzel, and the Baker families probably met in Virginia. Leonard Albert Baker married Marie Vivian Yankey in Crawford County, Iowa on September 27, 1935. They both grew to adulthood in Vail and attended Vail Public High School graduating in 1930. They are both buried in the Vail Cemetery, Vail, Iowa.

The Baker ¹ family and the Wetzel families are believed to have come from the Palatinate area of Germany to America. The Wetzel family originally was from Switzerland and the Baker family was from Germany. The Yankey family was reported to have come to Germany from Silesia. The Wetzel family was Weissel in Switzerland and Weitzel in Germany.

Martin Wetzel, Sr. was born in 1700 in Germany. On September 23, 1731 the “*Britannia*” arrived from the Palatinate area of Germany via Rotterdam in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The ship was under the command of Capt. Michael Franklin. On this ship was Hans Martin Wetzel, age 31, (Martin Wetzel, Sr., born in 1700) and his wife, Maria Barbara (Nehs ?) Wetzel, age 33, who was born in 1698. Their children included Hans Martin, Jr., age 6, born in 1725; Nicholas, age 4, born in 1727; and Catherina, age 3, born in 1728. Maria Barbara (Nehs ?) Wetzel’s parents were probably Mathias, Sr. and Maria Barbara Nehs who were on the same ship.^{2 3}

Also on the ship “*Britannia*” was Michael, Sr. and Anna Katerina (Wetzel?) Nehs and their children Magdalena, age 7; Hans Jacob, age 5; Katerina, age 2; and Michael, Jr., age 1. In 1783 Michael Nehs, Jr. was appointed as an Overseer of the Poor and guardian of Michael and Jacob Yankey. This probably Michael Nehs, Jr. the son of Michael Nehs, Sr. The church records list his name as Nease instead of Nehs. The name was also recorded as Neece in later records. It is Yankey family legend that the father of Michael Yankey died during the Revolutionary War but no record of that event has been found. The date of the appointment of Overseer of the Poor for Michael and Jacob Yankey would indicate that the death of their father, John, was during the time of the Revolutionary War.

Other passengers on the “*Britannia*” were Mathias Nehs Sr., age 58 and Maria Barbara Nehs, age 60. Their children included Michael, age 30 (married to Anna Katerina (Wetzel ?) Nehs, age 28); Jacob, age 31; Johan, age 26; Dewald, age 24; Hans George, age 21; and Matthias, Jr., age 27. Maria Marsha Wetzel, age 19, was also on the passenger list.

Johann Bartholmew Rieger (1707-1769) was the leader of this group of German immigrants. He was a student at Heidelberg University and a Reformed minister. Rieger and many of the Wetzel (Weitzel) family were from Ober-Ingelheim, Germany.⁴ Martin Wetzel, Sr. sponsored many baptisms of children of the area.⁵

On June 22, 1750 Andrew Jencke arrived in New York on the *Snow Irene*. On May 11, 1750 the ship had left Dover, England with the *Henry Jorde Colony* on board.^{6 7} Andrew Jencke was listed with the *Henry Jorde Colony* and he was from Silesia as was Henry Jorde.⁸

The Baker family was stated to have come from Bingen-on-the-Rhine, Germany.⁹ The author utilized a researcher from Germany to attempt to verify this fact. This researcher could not find

BAKER-YANKEY-WETZEL CONNECTIONS

any records of Becher immigrating in his search of records of Bingen-on-the-Rhine, Ober-Ingelheim, or Gensingen.¹⁰ Bingen-on-the-Rhine was predominately Roman Catholic in the 1700's and the Baker family was Protestant in America thus probably Protestant in Germany. The author believes that Captain John Baker was from further south in the Palatinate area. There was a high probability the he was German Lutheran, Dunkard, or Mennonite.

John Baker probably arrived on the ship *Brothers* on September 30, 1754. The passengers were from the Palatinate and Mentz areas of Germany. All of the passengers were Protestant except for seven that were Roman Catholic and twenty-three were Mennonite. Two hundred and ten were indentured and one hundred and one were not indentured. The passenger list of those underwritten (indentured) includes Johann George Becher, Jacob Becher, Frederick Becker, Peter Witsell, and Adam Witsell. The A list included Jurig Baker, the B list included Johann George Becher, and the C list included Johann Gorg Becher.¹¹ A second source of passengers lists Johann Georg Becker.¹²

The Martin Wetzel, Sr. family lived in Pennsylvania for several years before moving to Maryland. He first appeared in Maryland as a Lutheran and not as a Reformed church member. Martin, Sr. was naturalized on October 26, 1743 and Lutheran communion preceded the proceedings.¹³ Martin Wetzel, Sr. (1700) appears first in Frederick County, Maryland records with the children listed as the same age as when on the *Britannia*. Martin, Jr. was born in 1725; Nicholas born 1727; John Wetzel was born in 1733; Catherine Wetzel was born in 1728; and Henry Wetzel was born in 1735.

The area of Maryland along the Monocacy River was an early German settlement region. In 1732 Maryland offered land for settlement to English speaking people and David Dulany claimed about eight thousand acres. On May 28, 1743 Dulany assigned the certificate of survey land to Jacob Bonnett who assigned it to Martin Wetzel, Sr. It was on this land that Martin Wetzel, Sr. later settled.¹⁴ Martin Wetzel, Sr. called this area of one hundred acres the "*Mill Place*". The land was reported to lie west of Little Hunting Creek near a large swamp. This area of "*Old Monocacy*" was about three miles south of the present day Thurmont, Maryland.¹⁵ On November 25, 1741 the land was surveyed but may have been settled by the Wetzel family at an earlier date. The land was near the Monocacy Road about two miles north of the present-day Lewistown, Maryland.¹⁶ Martin Wetzel also received a patent for "*Bonnett's Resolution*" that had been surveyed on November 11, 1742 by Daniel Dulany.¹⁷ By 1753 Martin Wetzel owned four hundred acres of land in this area.

On June 17, 1738 Martin and Barbara sponsored an infant baptism in a German settlement area near Frederick Church, Maryland.¹⁸ By 1741 Martin and Barbara Wetzel, Sr. owned farm land called the "*Mill Place*" which was adjacent to land owned by Jean Jacques Bonnett.¹⁹

The German settlers left the Monocacy River Valley of Maryland because of excessive taxation from the land speculators in the area.²⁰ Many of these Maryland settlers had previously left Germany and Switzerland and came to America for the same reason. About 1732 the first German church in the Monocacy was built about one mile from where Creagerstown would be formed in 1760. This church was burned during the French and Indian War that began in 1755. The Monocacy Road followed an old Indian trail from Pennsylvania thru Maryland and over the

BAKER-YANKEY-WETZEL CONNECTIONS

Potomac River into Virginia. This follows roughly the current Route 15 thru Maryland.

In 1749 according to Lewis Yankey Martin Wetzel, Sr. sold his farm located about three miles south of Thurmont in Frederick County, Maryland to Martin Jr. and Elizabeth Wetzel. Martin, Sr. then appears in Winchester, Virginia where he died on August 2, 1760. His second wife, Eve, and Henry, his son, were executors of his estate and John Wetzel and Samuel Bonnett were bondsmen.

On November 11, 1760 Martin, Jr. and his wife Elizabeth sold the original Wetzel Maryland farm and settled in Brocks Gap, Virginia. Martin, Jr. died in 1794 and his will was declared invalid because of his insanity. The two hundred and forty-three acre estate went to John and Henry Wetzel, Adam Ruble, son of Catherine Wetzel, and Jacob Reese, son of Susannah Wetzel.²¹ Both John and Henry Wetzel died before the death of Martin, Jr. John Wetzel's remaining heirs appeared in Court in Rockingham County, Virginia for their one-fourth of the estate. Jacob Wetzel acted as the attorney for the John Wetzel heirs and deeded the land to Frederick Dove. Henry Wetzel's heirs, Catherine Wetzel's heirs, and Susannah Wetzel's heirs also deeded their land to Frederick Dove. After many years of controversy and court proceedings one hundred and thirty-eight acres of this land was ultimately owned by Jacob Yankey. When Jacob Yankey died this land was sold for tax deferments to Felix Yankey, grandson of Jacob Yankey.²²

In 1754 Captain John Wetzel, the son of Martin Wetzel, Sr., was married to Marie Bonnett²³ who was no doubt the daughter of Samuel Bonnett of Winchester, Virginia. In 1760 Martin Wetzel, Jr., Elizabeth, his wife, and his family moved from Frederick County, Maryland to Brock's Gap, Augusta County (now Rockingham), Virginia. In 1769 Captain John Wetzel and his family moved to the Big Wheeling Creek area in the Sand Hill District of Ohio County, Virginia (now Marshall, West Virginia) and established Wetzel's Fort. Ten other families moved with them to Ohio County, Virginia. Captain John Wetzel and his son Martin, Jr. were in the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774.

About 1761 Andrew Jencke was probably in Shenandoah County (Dinsmore). In 1772 he is listed in Court records of Dinsmore County when he had a suit over a lease.²⁴ On August 29, 1775 Andrew Yankey and Jacob Yankey, children of Andrew Jencke, were baptized in the Rader Church of Timberville, Virginia.²⁵ On December 26, 1783 a third son, Michael Yankey, was listed along with Andrew and Jacob on records of the Overseers of the Poor of Shenandoah County, Virginia.²⁶ Michal Yankey was the father of Jacob Yankey.

On June 6, 1786 Captain John Wetzel was killed by Indians near Baker's Station, Cresap's Bottom, Ohio (now Marshall) County, West Virginia. He was buried in Grave Yard Run, Cresap's Bottom, Baker's Station, Ohio (now Marshall County), West Virginia. Captain John Baker, killed by Indians the next year, was buried in the same cemetery. Wetzel County, West Virginia is named for Lewis Wetzel of this family.²⁷

The children of Capt. John and Marie Bonnett Wetzel included Christina, born about 1754; Martin Jr., born about 1756; and George, born in 1757 were born in Maryland. Lewis was born in 1763 in Virginia. Jacob, born in 1765; Susannah, born in 1767 and John, Jr. were born in Virginia. After moving to Ohio County, Virginia many of the family of Capt. John Wetzel were

BAKER-YANKEY-WETZEL CONNECTIONS

killed by Indians.

In 1819 Jacob Wetzel, son of Capt. John Wetzel, completed the Wetzel (Whetzel) Trace in Indiana. This was a sixty mile road thru virgin forests from Franklin to Morgan counties in Indiana. Wetzel (Whetzel) Settlement near Waverly at the Western end of the Trace was considered as a site for the capital of Indiana but the Site commissioners chose Indianapolis as the State capital by a three to two vote.

When Martin Wetzel, Sr. died in Brocks Gap, Virginia in 1794 he had four heirs. They included Henry Wetzel, Capt. John Wetzel's heirs, Catherine Wetzel Ruble's heirs, Susannah Wetzel's heirs.

Wetzel's Fort and Baker's Station immediately became the targets of Indian raids. Baker's Station was located on Cresap's Bottom near the present day Cresap, West Virginia. A roadside marker along West Virginia Route # 2 commemorates Baker's Station. This marker is about two miles south of the original Baker's Station. Captain John Wetzel and Captain John Baker were in the Revolutionary War. Lewis, Martin, and Captain John Wetzel were among the defenders in the second attack on Fort Henry on September 11-13, 1782 by the British and the Indians. This is known as the last battle of the Revolutionary War.

George Wetzel, brother of John Wetzel, and John Baker, Jr., son of Captain John Baker, were also killed by Indians. Lewis, Jacob, and John Jr. Wetzel became legendary for their adventures in Indian fighting. Lewis Wetzel was a folk hero in Indian fighting as he could load his muzzle loader while running at full speed. He spent his life in Indian fighting to seek revenge for the death of his father and family torture by the Indians.

In 1781 the Wetzel brothers were scouts in raids against the Indians near Coshocton, Coshocton County, Ohio. They were also scouts with General St. Clair in the Northwest Territory of Virginia. They often were at Baker's Station, Cresaps, Marshall County, West Virginia. They were in the party that was attacked by Indians when Captain John Baker was killed in 1787.

Lewis Wetzel, Mary Bonnett Wetzel, Martin, Jr. Wetzel, and John, Jr. Wetzel are buried in the McCreary Cemetery, Marshall County, West Virginia two miles from the Wetzel homestead.

In 1759 Henry Wetzel, the son of Martin Wetzel, Jr., married Sarah (? Catherine) Weatherholtz (?). Their children included Martin, Catherine, Jacob, Mary "Polly", John, Elizabeth, Peter, Henry, Barbara, and Susan. Henry Wetzel was reportedly a Revolutionary War soldier.

Barbara Wetzel, daughter of Henry Wetzel, married John Riggleman and their children included John, Jacob, Mary, Margaret, Sarah "Sallie", Catherine, and Aaron.

Sarah "Sallie" Riggleman had a child with Aaron Dove named Judith Riggleman. Sarah Riggleman later married George Hottinger. Judith Riggleman married Jacob Yankey, son of Michael Yankey, and grandson of the immigrant, Andrew Johann Yankey.

Jacob Yankey was the father of Noah Yankey, grandfather of William Oscar Yankey, great

BAKER-YANKEY-WETZEL CONNECTIONS

grandfather of Marie Vivian Yankey Baker. Marie Vivian Yankey married Leonard Albert Baker to complete the triangle of families.

Source:

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¹ *Movers and Settlers: The Baker Family*, Phillip Leonard Baker, Vol. 11, 2006

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³ *Pioneers of Old Monocacy, The Early Settlement of Frederick County, Maryland 1721-1743*, page 207, Grace L. Tracey and John P. Dern, Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1987

⁴ *Ibid.*, page 208

⁵ *Ibid.*, page 209

⁶ *The Moravian Ship Irene*, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

⁷ *The Moravian Ship Irene*, Betty Green, <http://fmoran.com/irene/html>, 2005

⁸ *The Moravian Ship Irene*

⁹ *Descendants of Captain John Baker*, Valerie Jean Kramer, 1999

¹⁰ Uwe Porten, Bingen-am-Rhine, Germany, personal correspondence, 2001

¹¹ *Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, Pennsylvania German Society, Vol. I, 1727-1774, Ralph Beaver Strassberger and edited by William Hinke, Ph.D, D.D., page 707.

¹² *Oath of Allegiance to the Province and State of Pennsylvania, 1727-1775*, edited by William Henry Egle, M.D., Harrisburg, Edwin K. Meyers, State Printer, 1892, page 432-433

¹³ *Pioneers of Old Monocacy, The Early Settlement of Frederick County, Maryland, 1721-1742*, page 208

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *History of Frederick County Maryland*, Thomas J. C. Williams

¹⁶ *Pioneers of Old Monocacy, The Early Settlement of Frederick County, Maryland, 1721-1742*, page 208

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, page 209

¹⁸ *Descendants of Henry Whetzel, Sr.*, Edna Whetzel Dove, Criders, Virginia, 2003

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Pioneers of Old Monocacy, The Early Settlement of Frederick County, Maryland, 1721-1743*

²¹ *The Wetzel Family*, page 3

²² *Ibid.*, page 25

²³ *Pioneers of Old Monocacy, The Early Settlement of Frederick County, Maryland, 1721-1742*, page 209

²⁴ Dunmore (Shenandoah) County, Virginia Records, 1772

BAKER-YANKEY-WETZEL CONNECTIONS

²⁵ *Record Book of Rader Church, Timberville, Virginia*, 31A

²⁶ Guardian Papers, Shenandoah County, Virginia, December 26, 1783

²⁷ *Affair at Captina Creek*, Harry Enoch, Heritage Books, 1999